

Around the House

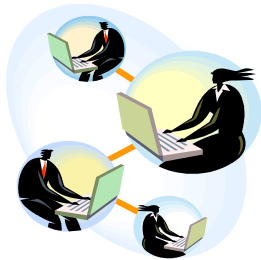


NEWS FROM THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Volume 1, Issue 1

JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2009

2009 Is A Brand New Year!



**Wichita Housing Authority:
Working Smarter and Harder
For You!**

Throughout this newsletter you will see the word NEW! That is because we are entering a NEW year and many of our programs are going into a NEW phase also.

One of the biggest and NEWEST programs is our electronic record keeping system. We have been transitioning to the new system for the past 3 months. There

have been a few bumps along the way but the staff have worked really hard, to ensure that our Public Housing and Section 8 work functions have continued.

Following are some of the highlights of the NEW system:

- ⊞ Clients will see a more professional-looking product in terms of letters and statements that are electronically generated.
- ⊞ Program managers will have faster access to important financial reports.
- ⊞ In addition to faster access, the NEW system will generate different types of reports which

will improve our ability to provide required information to HUD, which provides our funding!

With the new system, none of the regulations and expectations of staff and clients have changed—we still expect timely rent payments from tenants and staff will continue to respond to tenant concerns. However we now have a better way to track and report on everyone's activities.

We apologize for any inconvenience you may have experienced as we have transitioned to the new system. But we are certain that this is going to enhance our ability to deliver quality customer service to you!

Housing First—New Program Kicks Off!

The City of Wichita and Sedgwick County are joining together to provide permanent housing for persons who are chronically homeless. The goal of the "Housing First" program is to place a homeless person in housing and then offer services such as counseling, referrals to

treatment programs and assistance accessing federal and state benefit programs.

The program is funded to provide rental payments to house 64 persons over the course of the year. It will also offer help with utility payments and furnishings which will help the clients

become more stabilized and get back on their feet.

Many communities across the country have found that this approach costs less than the traditional shelter system and street living conditions—plus the homeless persons have a higher rate of success in ending their homelessness.

Dru Thomas Scholarship Money Available

- HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS OR ADULTS WHO HAVE AT LEAST 24 HOURS OF COLLEGE
- ONE \$500 AND TWO \$300 SCHOLARSHIPS
- OBTAIN APPLICATION FROM KANSAS CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REHABILITATION OFFICIALS (NAHRO)
- [WWW.KSNAHRO.ORG/FILES/2008 DRU THOMAS SCHOLARSHIP.PDF](http://WWW.KSNAHRO.ORG/FILES/2008%20DRU%20THOMAS%20SCHOLARSHIP.PDF) OR CALL (913) 367-3323

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Around the House

From the Director



Mary K. Vaughn invites readers to submit questions related to department programs for a new feature: **Ask the Director!**

The start of a NEW year is often the cause of reflection on the old year as well as a time to make plans for the future.

Reflections. A few weeks ago the 2009 department calendar was distributed to Public Housing residents and Section 8 voucher holders. In that document you will find a summary of the department's key programs and highlights of those programs for the past year.

Future. As you review the calendar pages you may also identify programs that you would like to take advantage of in 2009. Contact information for each is also included on the calendar's back page. Feel free to contact the staff to find out if you qualify!

One of the things I would like to do in the coming year, is hear from you. I will devote a section of this column to answering questions that you submit in advance. Please submit your questions in writ-

ing or by email mkvaughn@wichita.gov and I will select one or 2 to answer in each newsletter. I will not be able to answer questions about your individual situations but if you've always wondered why we do things a certain way, 2009 is the time to get your answers!

I look forward to hearing from you—and wish you and your families a prosperous new year!

Mary K. Vaughn

THE PUBLIC
HOUSING
PROGRAM NEEDS
APPLICANTS FROM
FAMILIES OF 4 OR
MORE! IF YOU
KNOW OF
SOMEONE, HAVE
THEM CONTACT
MS. JOHNSON AT
462-3730.

Public Housing News—HUD Property Inspections

During the weeks of February 2 (Mon-Thurs) and February 9 (Mon and Tues), the HUD contract inspector will be in Wichita to evaluate 25% of Public Housing properties. A random selection will be made to decide which rental units will be visited. Public Housing staff cannot tell you beforehand that your City-owned rental unit will or will not be selected, so all Public Housing

residents are asked to take advantage of this advance notice to be prepared in case your unit is selected. It is suggested that you thoroughly clean your unit, test your smoke detector (push the test button) and make note of items needing repair such as broken electrical switches and outlets, and loose or broken light fixtures. Call maintenance at 462-3789 between

8 am and 5 pm Mon-Fri, to report any such item.

You are also reminded that you are responsible for keeping your lawn mowed and free of debris.

The inspections will take place between 9 am and 4:30 pm; if you are not home a Housing Authority staff member may enter your property with the inspector.



Our Employee Values

- ◆ Respectfully helping others achieve safe, affordable housing
- ◆ Empowering people and improving neighborhoods
- ◆ Making a difference—right where people live
- ◆ Investing in people with their housing needs

Employee News!

A long time City employee retired in December (2008), after over 35 years of service. **Addison DeAllie** spent most of his career in the Housing & Community Services Department as an Accountant. A quiet, unassuming man, Addison was a steady worker who made a positive impact on the department.

He is wished the very best in his retirement!

Just as we said good-bye to Addison, we welcomed a new employee, **Teresa Price**. Teresa transferred from the Finance Department and has joined our fiscal unit with primary responsibilities for payroll. We welcome Teresa

and look forward to working with her for many years to come!

Terry Jones and **Greg Harrison** have also reached milestones with the City employment—each has 10 years of service!

Section 8 Program News for Clients

Below is a message for landlords regarding acceptable heating equipment in units. However heating can be a concern to the tenant as well, especially at this time of year. Section 8 voucher holders are reminded that assistance is available through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). Income and family guidelines must be met in order to qualify for this one-time per year benefit. The

amount of the benefit varies based on household income, number of persons living at the address, type of dwelling, type of heating fuel, and utility rates. Once calculated, the payment is sent directly to the energy provider and the family must pay the remainder of their energy costs. For more information about this program or to request an application, call 1-800-432-0043 or contact your local SRS office. The application

period is January 20 through March 31, 2009.

Section 8 voucher holders are reminded that meeting your financial obligations in terms of rent and utility payments, is required for your continued participation in the program. It is hoped that this resource will help you comply with this requirement.

Also, please note the upcoming meeting schedule ➡

Family Self-Sufficiency
Workshops
Atwater Neighborhood
City Hall
2755 E 19th
6:00 pm

February 19
March 26

Section 8 Homeowners
Alumni Meetings
Atwater Neighborhood
City Hall
2755 E 19th
5:30 pm

February 23
April 20

Section 8 Landlords Note—New Rule on Heaters

Due to safety and energy consumption concerns, the Housing Authority is no longer accepting units into the Section 8 program, where the primary heat sources are electric wall and baseboard heating systems. This policy went into effect on October 14, 2008. Units which were being subsidized by the program as of the effective

date, will be allowed to continue with the current tenant. However once that tenant relocates, the unit will not be allowed back into the program.

All primary heating systems in a dwelling unit should be in safe and good working condition, capable of maintaining a 70 degree Fahrenheit temperature three feet from

the floor in all habitable rooms.

Landlords are also reminded of the Kansas Smoke Detector Act which requires that all single family residences have at least one working smoke detector on every level of the dwelling, and that landlords must supply and install the smoke detectors in rental units.

HEATING

EQUIPMENT IS A
LEADING CAUSE
OF HOME FIRE
DEATHS,
ACCORDING TO
THE NATIONAL
FIRE PROTECTION
ASSOCIATION.

HAP Payment Schedule

MONTH	CHECK MAIL DATE
January 2009	January 5, 2009
February, 2009	January 30, 2009
March, 2009	February 27, 2009
April, 2009	March 31, 2009



Don't forget to sign up for direct deposit of Housing Assistance Payments for fast access to your funds! Go to www.wichita.gov and click on the Finance Department. From there you will see a link for Automated Clearinghouse (ACH). Click there and follow the 3 simple

Mission .. To provide housing & related services to benefit the citizens & neighborhoods of Wichita

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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We're On the Web!
www.wichita.gov/cityoffices/housing



**NEWS
YOU CAN
USE!!**

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC)

The federal government has a program to assist low to moderate income individuals and families, with a special tax refund. If you've never taken advantage of the program, please review the following details and consider it this year if you believe you qualify.

The EITC is a credit for certain people who work.

The EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits. In most cases, EITC payments will not be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, low-income housing or most Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) payments.

Following is the income limit for people who are married with 2 or more qualifying children: \$41,646.

The maximum benefit that the above referenced family could receive is: \$4,824.

If you want to see if your particular situation would qualify for a tax refund, visit one of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites which will be open starting February 9, 2009. For more information, call 2-1-1 for more information on the FREE tax preparation sites.

